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**Understanding undergraduate disengagement from mathematics: addressing alienation.**

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Summary: This paper explores the phenomenon of student disengagement from university mathematics through the lens of Marx's concept of alienation. Distinguishing between alienation as an objective relationship and the subjective state of disaffection, it argues that dominant modes of teaching in the English school system produce alienated relationships with mathematics, including among successful students, which university teaching does not necessarily reverse. Drawing on interviews with 15 second-year mathematics single major students from 4 universities, in which they explain their experiences of university mathematics, we argue that 'undoing' alienation and enhancing engagement at university rests on the development of new relationships with mathematics through greater support for students' developing confidence in independent mathematical judgement.

*Classification:* C25

*Keywords:* undergraduate mathematics; alienation; disengagement

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